

Salem Lamartine 11:00 3/1168

Processional Hymn 27

*Call to Worship Ps 199

*Confession of Sin

*Assurance of Pardon

Scripture Mark 12; 18-27

* Gloria Patri

*Apostles Creed

*Pastoral Prayer

Anthem

Announcements

Billy Graham crusade Sept. 7th 7:30

1.00 per person

Confirmation class

FLEMMING HAYS

NANCY WERTER

MRS MYRNA RITT BIRTHDAY 13TH

ADDRESS ON ROAD.

VISI FOR VILLORE

Offering, Response, Prayer

Hymn 203

Sermon

Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Hymn 471

*Benediction

*Threefold Amen

*Postlude

WELCOME VISITORS
(MR & MRS FRED NOT)

OTHER VISITORS WELCOME

TUESDAY NITE 7:30 HEIDELBERG
CLASS.

ADVENT WREATH 22ND

TRINITY CHARGE--THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Ralph C. Link, Pastor

Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 9:00 A.M.
Christ Church, Duncannon 10:30 A.M.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP November 8, 1970

The Organ Prelude
*The Hymn of Praise 1
*The Call to Worship
*The Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Almighty & Merciful God, the Fountain of all goodness, who knowest the thoughts of our hearts, we confess unto thee that we have sinned against thee, & done evil in thy sight. Wash us, we beseech thee, from the stains of our past sins, & give us grace & power to put away all hurtful things; so that, being delivered from the bondage of sin, we may bring forth worthy fruits of repentance. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Kyrie
*The Assurance of Pardon
The Scripture----Mark 12:18-27
*The Gloria Patri
*The Collect For The Day (Unison)

Almighty God, we beseech thee, show thy mercy unto thy humble servants, that we who put no trust in our own merits may not be dealt with after the severity of thy judgment, but according to thy mercy; through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth & reigneth with thee & the Holy Spirit, over One God, world without end. Amen.

The Pastoral Prayer
The Receiving of Tithes & Offerings
*The Doxology
*The Offering Prayer & Lord's Prayer
The Hymn of Meditation 207
The Sermon----"Whose Wife Is She?"
The Sermon Prayer

*The Hymn of Response
*The Benediction
*The Threefold Amen
*The Postlude

272

*Denotes Congregation Standing

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank Offering & Harvest Home will be observed Nov. 22 in both churches.

CHRIST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Joint meeting of Womens Guild Thursday Nov. 12 instead of Friday. Usual Thank Offering Service. Thank Offering boxes may be found in the back of the Church for anyone not receiving them.

Laity Sunday will be observed next Sunday. The laymen will be in charge of the complete service. Mr. William Reed will deliver the message.

TRINITY CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Women United Christmas project this year is diapers to be sent to Kentucky. Closing date is Nov. 22. There is a box in the back of the Church for donations for this worthy project.

We pledged to Hoffman Home \$600 three years ago. To date we have little over \$150 paid into this fund. The end of the year we must pay our obligation. May we all search our hearts to contribute to this fine home.

The Family Advent Wreath Fellowship will be held next Sunday Nov. 15 at 3:00 P.M. Please make an effort to attend & let's notify those who have not been in church.

Whose Wife Will She Be?

Text: Mark 12:23

Before we begin this morning I would like to ask you two questions. I am not asking because I want to see whether you know your Bible or not. Nor am I asking to embarrass anyone. If you choose not to respond then by all means do not respond. I know that I mentioned the Apocrypha several times, but I would like to ask how many had ever heard of the Apocrypha before I mentioned it? Please raise your hands. Now how many of you that heard of it ever read it? Again raise your hands. Thank you. Before we ever studied the Apocrypha, I knew of its existence, however I had never read it, and in fact I have not read all of it yet. My reasons for asking these questions will become evident in a very short time. So please bear with me for a time.

Our Scripture this morning at first glance appears to be another trap which the leading Jews of the day have laid for Jesus. Note how cleverly they approach Him. The Sadducees came to Him we are told, and it is also pointed out that they denied the resurrection. They therefore were the right ones to be asking the question of whose wife the woman would be in heaven if she had had seven brothers in succession for her husband on earth. The Pharisees and the Sadducees had only one thing in common and that was to trap Jesus in His own words so they could get rid of Him. But other than that the two groups were at opposites on everything else. However the thing that is overlooked most often is the fact that the hypothetical question asked of Jesus was not one which these men had made up or imagined, but was actually a story they had read. It was the entire book of Tobit which is found in the Apocrypha. The Sadducees knew these books as did Jesus, so they were actually asking Him about the answer to a story.

Before we go any farther let me point out that the reading of the Bible is not only enjoyable but necessary if we are going to quote it. To quote passages and not know the background surrounding it is to go off half cocked. This is where some people acquire the stigma of religious fanatics. For each book of the Bible there is at least one commentary written on it. I say one to be on the safe side, but I know that for most there are many commentaries that have been written.

So if we want to know the background of a certain book we should make use of the different commentaries available. Many public libraries carry some of these so we need ^{not} buy them to read them. Now I am not saying that we should all become Biblical scholars. But if we perhaps want to get more enjoyment out of our Bibles and in fact learn how they were composed, how it came into being, and understand much more when we read, then we should try this method.

Getting back to the Apocrypha, the reason why it was left out of the original Canon or group of books included in the Old Testament was, because the books were not written in Hebrew. The basic stipulation for any book to be included in the Old Testament was that it had to be written in Hebrew. The strange thing about the books ^{OF THE A.P.C.} is that they were probably all written in Hebrew the first time, but for some strange reason the Hebrew versions were destroyed and they were re-written in Greek. ^{EXAMPLE OF RABBI GRADIN} There have been for instance some Hebrew and Aramaic fragments of the book of Tobit found near the Dead Sea. We should also point out that although the Hebrew Canon would not include these books the Christian Canon did. However they have not all been accepted by all of the Church Fathers done through the years. The word Apocrypha means, "Hidden Books." Fifteen books are listed. 3 History books, 2 Historical novels, and the rest are supplements to other books, such as an addition to Daniel, Esther and several others. These books cover a blank of 400 years from Ezra and Nehemiah to the time of Jesus. These years are called the silent centuries. ^{THOUGHT THEM IMPORTANT ENOUGH AND} Luther included the Apocrypha in his Bible and many pulpit Bibles of the King James Version include it. It can be purchased in a separate book also. I am again using for my background the Jerusalem Bible. What I express are most often my thoughts and my ideas, and I am using many references to the Jerusalem Bible. I do not ask that you accept this or any other Bible sermon. Nor do I ask that you believe everything I believe. In my reading both from the Bible and from other books, I am still seeking the truth, and still shaping my beliefs. If you choose to believe that every word written in the Bible is literally true, then by all means continue to believe this.

The book of Tobit is a historical book, and although it tells some of the history of the Hebrews, it is not told in the chronological order that has

been worked out by Bible scholars. The Jerusalem Bible makes a statement about The books of Judith, Tobit and Esther which explains the scholars viewpoint about these three books which run pretty much in the same vein. "The only explanation of this surprising indifference, (to the chronological order of history), is that the authors are not writing history. No doubt they build on actual events but we have no means of knowing what these were, since the superstructure conceals them. But it is precisely this superstructure that is the real work of the author and conveys his message. The important thing is to discover the exact purpose of each book and to extract the teaching contained in it." Unquote. To which I may add that the last sentence could apply to all the Bible.

The book of Tobit is a domestic story. In the city of Ninevah there lived a man by the name of Tobit. He was exiled there with his tribe of Naphtali. We are told he was a devout, law-abiding, charitable man, who was blind at the time of the story. In Ecbatana lived his kinsman Raguel. This man had a daughter whose name was Sarah and she had been married seven times to seven different bridegrooms who mysteriously died on their wedding night. Now the reason for their deaths is due to the fact that the demon Asmodeus is in love with Sarah. He cannot tolerate anyone else having her so he lets the wedding take place, but when the bride and groom go into the bridal chamber the groom dies. Now both Tobit and Sarah beg God to let them die. Tobit because he is blind, and Sarah because of her luckless marriages. But God answers their prayers in His own way. He sends his angel Raphael who takes Tobit's son Tobias safely to Raguel and Tobias marries the girl Sarah, destroys the demon and then returns home and cures his fathers blindness. Now the angel Raphael is not known to Tobias as such, for he tells Tobias and his father that his name is Azarias. Tobit hires Raphael the angel to take his son to Raguel to marry Sarah. So they start off and on the way they came to the Tigris river. They camped there that night, and Tobias had set on the river bank to wash his feet and a large fish leaped out of the water and all but swallowed his feet. He shouted at Raphael told him to catch the fish, to cut it open and to take the gall, the heart and the liver and keep them. They traveled to the house of Raguel and after Tobias proved that he was the kinsman next in line to marry Sarah, the arrangements

were made that they should be married. So they were married and afterward the angel Raphael took Tobias aside and instructed him on what to do after he entered the bridal chamber. His instructions were to take the heart and the liver and to place them on the little bucket of burning incense ^{IN THE ROOM} and the stench of it ^{WILL} rise to the nostrils of the demon Asmodeus and he ^{WILL} flee from Sarah and never come back. So this is what he does and he becomes the first bridegroom who emerges alive from the bridal suite the next day. However Raguel the father being a very practical man took his servants and they dug a grave for Tobias. Then he sent a maid to the bedroom to see if he was ready to be buried, and the maid went and found them both fast asleep. She reported this to Raguel who had his servants fill in the grave again. After staying over for two weeks Tobias took his bride and returned to his father. Before they arrived the angel Raphael told Tobias to take the gall of the fish and rub it on his father's eyes and a white film would come from his eyes and his sight would be restored again. This he did and it happened as the angel had said. Then Raphael told them to thank God for all their blessings, and he told them ^W he was. They fell on their faces and Raphael told them not to be afraid, and then he arose in the air out of sight. The story ends telling of the death of Tobit at the age of 112. After the death of his mother Tobias returns to Media the land of his wife Sarah. One thing I forgot to say was that after each event Tobias, Sarah, and the others in the story praised God and thanked Him.

Now we ask what can a strange story such as this tell us? The answer is that God and His providence are with us every day. God blesses man beyond measure. We may many times not feel this way. We may feel that life is intolerable, and that our every move is filled with grief and tragedy. We may feel that we are afflicted far beyond what others are. But out of some of the most adverse situations God brings man to the heights. This story this morning is telling us of this. It points out that although these two main characters of this story are afflicted, they are still looked after and cared for by the love of God. All of us are cared for by God like this. There are many people who would disagree with this. But the reason for this is the fact that they are either too reluctant to give God the credit for the guidance He has given them, or else they are too dumb to recognize

the Hand of God in their daily lives. This is one of the main causes of ingratitude and unbelief in God. In this respect many people are like the man who wanted to borrow 2000 dollars from his best friend who owned a very prosperous bookstore. When he walked into the store he said, "Joe I have a favor to ask of you, I would like you to loan me 2000 dollars." He said, "Sam I positively can't do that." Then Sam began to recount some of the things that he had done for Joe. He asked him who loaned him ten thousand dollars during the depression to keep his business going? He answered "You did Sam." And who was it who sent your daughter to Florida to be in the warm climate to clear up an infection. He answered, "You did Sam." And when we were out on the lake five years ago and you fell out of the boat, who was it who dove into the lake and at great risk of his own life saved you from drowning? "Why it was you Sam." Then how can you possibly refuse to loan me the money, He inquired? To which he replied, "All the things you say are true Sam, But what have you done for me lately?" Isn't this the way many people look at God? What have you done for me lately God? We forget the blessings of the past. We are prone to overlook the goodness that has been given to us in the past. We don't remember the time when it seemed that everyone had deserted us, but it was God that stayed with us. All of these things are water over the dam. They are past, gone and forgotten. But God is still blessing us and caring for us. We need to thank Him again for all that He has given us. We can never possibly repay what He has done for us. But we can at least show our gratitude and thankfulness. Our thoughts should be directed toward God and in the words of the Psalmist, "Seek the Lord, while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near." Let us seek the Lord all our lives and never come to feel that He has not done anything for us recently. Let us seek the Lord. Let us pray.